

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1 - 8 (cancelled).

1 9. (currently amended) Installation for making a
2 nonwoven textile web comprising:
3 - extruding means comprising at least one
4 extruder for feeding a melted organic polymer to a
5 spinneret for producing a curtain of filaments, cooling
6 means including a cooling zone for providing at least
7 surface solidification of said filaments, a filament-
8 drawing assembly including a suction device
9 comprising a narrow chamber of rectangular cross-
10 section in which said curtain of filaments is drawn by
11 high-speed air streams, said chamber having an
12 adjustable width and extending to a chamber outlet for
13 emitting drawn filaments, distributing means for
14 deflecting and slowing air streams at the chamber
15 outlet and for distributing the filaments homogeneously
16 over a receiving belt, said extruding means, cooling
17 means, filament-drawing assembly and distributing means

18 being separately controllable and independently
19 adjusted during start-up and continuous operation.

1 10. (previously presented) Installation according
2 to claim 9, in which the cooling means and the
3 filament-drawing assembly each comprise a plurality of
4 elementary modules placed side by side, the
5 distributing means extending along the entire width of
6 the web produced.

1 11. (previously presented) Installation according
2 to claim 9, in which the cooling zone comprises an
3 assembly having a plurality of successive zones for
4 subjecting the curtain of filaments to a transverse air
5 current, the speed and temperature of which may be
6 adjusted independently in each of the zones.

1 12. (currently amended) Installation according to
2 claim 9, in which ~~the suction device has a suction~~
3 ~~slot, the~~ said chamber width of which may be adjusted
4 automatically according to the production of the
5 machine.

1 13. (previously presented) Installation according
2 to claim 9, in which the distributing means is spaced

3 from the filament drawing assembly and comprises an
4 assembly which laterally deflects the air flow,
5 reducing the speed thereof and that of the filaments,
6 and facilitating the uniform deposition on the
7 receiving belt by eliminating any rebound at the moment
8 of this deposition.

1 14. (previously presented) Installation according
2 to claim 13, in which the distributing means is
3 associated with an assembly which electrostatically
4 charges the said filaments before deposition on the
5 receiving belt.

1 15. (previously presented) Installation according
2 to claim 9, further including computer means for
3 controlling the extruder means, the cooling means, the
4 filament-drawing assembly and the distributing means,
5 making it possible to bring about the increase in speed
6 of the production line automatically.

16. (cancelled).

1 17. (new) A method for making a nonwoven textile
2 web wherein extruded filaments are passed through
3 successive cooling zones, drawn by high-speed air

4 streams in a drawing assembly having a suction slot for
5 said filaments and drawn filaments are homogeneously
6 deposited over a receiving belt by distributing the
7 filaments to form said nonwoven textile web, comprising
8 the steps of:

9 a) extruding a melted organic polymer through a
10 spinneret to form said filaments at an elevated
11 temperature;

12 b) during a start-up phase, passing said filaments
13 at a start-up speed and at said elevated temperature
14 through said successive cooling zones, contacting said
15 filaments with transverse flows of air at relatively
16 lower temperatures in each of said cooling zones, and
17 controlling the speed of the transverse flow of air in
18 each zone to a value between 0.5m/second and 3m/second;
19 and

20 c) during a following production phase, increasing
21 the speed of the filaments progressively from said
22 start-up speed to a higher production speed, and
23 regulating the temperature and speed of said transverse
24 flows of air in said cooling zones to:

25 o increase the air speed in a first
26 successive zone, the temperature
27 remaining unchanged,

28 ◦ increase the temperature in a second
29 successive zone to bring it to the level
30 of that of the first zone and increase
31 the air speed in this zone,
32 ◦ increase the air temperature in a third
33 successive zone and increase the air
34 speed in this zone,
35 simultaneously, progressively reducing the
36 width of said suction slot to attain a
37 nominal operating width, with the pressure of
38 the drawing air being progressively
39 increased; and
40 d) homogeneously depositing the drawn filaments
41 emitted from said suction slot over said receiving belt
42 to form said nonwoven textile web.

1 18. (new) The method of claim 17, wherein said
2 suction slot has an outlet opening from which said
3 drawn filaments are emitted and said step of
4 homogeneously depositing said drawn filaments over said
5 receiving belt includes deflecting and slowing said
6 drawing air at said suction slot opening.

1 19. (new) The method of claim 18, wherein said
2 steps of filament extruding, cooling, drawing and
3 distributing are independently controlled during said
4 start-up and production phases.

1 20. (new) The method of claim 19, wherein said
2 distributing step includes applying an electrostatic
3 charge to said drawn filaments.

1 21. (new) Installation for making a nonwoven
2 textile web comprising:

3 • at least one extruder for a melted organic
4 polymer feeding a spinneret for producing a curtain of
5 filaments,

6 • a cooling zone for bringing about at least
7 surface solidification of said extruded filaments,

8 • a suction slot in the form of a narrow chamber
9 of rectangular cross-section having a suction outlet,
10 inside which the curtain of filaments is subjected to
11 the action of high-speed air streams causing said to be
12 drawn;

13 • means for deflecting and slowing down the air
14 flow at the suction outlet of the drawing slot and for
15 distributing the filaments homogeneously over a
16 receiving belt;
17 characterized in that there is provided means for
18 adjusting the width of the suction slot.